

**GROUSE CREEK, LESTER CREEK, MENNECKE CREEK,
RATTLESNAKE CREEK, RIMROCK GRAZING, SMITH PRAIRIE,
SPRING CREEK AND WILLIAMS CREEK C&H ALLOTMENTS
2011 ANNUAL OPERATING INSTRUCTIONS**

Boise National Forest
Mountain Home Ranger District

INTRODUCTION

The following information is direction on how livestock management is to be conducted on the Grouse Creek, Lester Creek, Mennecke Creek, Rattlesnake Creek, Rimrock Grazing, Smith Prairie, Spring Creek and Williams Creek Cattle & Horse (C&H) Allotments for the 2011 grazing season. The Annual Operating Instructions (AOI) are part of your Term grazing Permit consistent with Part 1, Item 3 and Part 2, Item 8(a), and you are responsible for compliance with this direction.

Situations may develop during the grazing season that could require changes to these instructions. If this becomes necessary, or if you cannot comply with some part of these instructions, contact Tina Ruffing, Monte Miller or Cindy Lancaster, district range staff, and obtain approval before initiating or deviating from your AOI. Failure to obtain prior approval could result in permit action.

The following table displays the permitted numbers and seasons of use for your allotments:

Allotment	Permitted Number and Class	Permitted Season of Use
Grouse Creek	185 cow/calf	06/01-10/30
pvt land permit	35 cow/calf	06/01-10/31
Lester Creek	164 cow/calf	07/01-10/31
Mennecke	287 cow/calf	06/01-09/30
River Unit	100 cow/calf	05/01-05/24
Rattlesnake	282 cow/calf	05/01-10/31
Rimrock - on	15 cow/calf	04/01-10/31
off numbers	325 cow/calf	04/01-10/31
Smith Prairie	55 cow/calf	05/01-10/15
Spring Creek	70 cow/calf	05/01-06/30
Williams Creek - on	4 cow/calf	07/01-10/31
off numbers	696 cow/calf	07/01-10/31

For the 2011 grazing season, you are authorized to graze your allotments as follows:

Allotment	Authorized Number and Class	Authorized Season of Use
Grouse Creek	185 cow/calf	06/01-10/30
pvt land permit	35 cow/calf	06/01-10/31
Lester Creek	164 cow/calf	07/01-10/31
Mennecke	287 cow/calf	06/01-09/30
River Unit	100 cow/calf	05/01-05/26
Rattlesnake	282 cow/calf	05/01-10/31
Rimrock - on	15 cow/calf	04/01-10/31
off numbers	325 cow/calf	04/01-10/31
Smith Prairie	55 cow/calf	05/01-10/15
Spring Creek	70 cow/calf	05/01-06/30
Williams Creek - on	4 cow/calf	07/01-10/31
off numbers	696 cow/calf	07/01-10/31

Some flexibility will be allowed for weather conditions, range readiness and livestock needs. The period of use is also subject to compliance with Forest Plan standards and guidelines and Implementation Monitoring requirements as discussed below. Please review carefully the standards and guides listed.

BILLING INFORMATION

The grazing fee for the 2011 grazing season is \$1.35 per head month for cattle. You will be billed based on the authorized use listed above. Confirmation of payment through the National Finance Center is required and must be received before livestock can enter National Forest System lands. In order to meet this requirement, please ensure that bills for collection are paid by the due date indicated.

If permitted livestock are required to leave an allotment early because utilization standards have been reached, drought conditions persist or other reasons as determined by the Forest Officer, a credit/refund may be requested. **This request must be submitted in writing to the District Ranger by December 1, 2011.**

LIVESTOCK MANAGEMENT

Direction for how livestock will be run is outlined below for each allotment.

It has been noted in the past year that salt blocks have been left on several allotments after livestock have been removed. Salt blocks or tubs should be moved from unit to unit with livestock and all salt needs to be removed from the allotment at the end of the grazing season. This standard is part of the terms and conditions in your Term Grazing Permit.

You must notify the Forest Service no less than five (5) days prior to livestock being placed on the allotments so that authorized livestock numbers can be verified by district range staff if the Forest Service elects to do so.

Grouse Creek Allotment

A deferred system of grazing will be continued on the Grouse Creek allotment this grazing season. Livestock will enter the South Fork Unit first this season where they will remain until approximately July 7 or until utilization standards are reached. Livestock will then be moved to the Wood Creek Unit where they will remain until approximately August 15 or until utilization standards are met. Livestock will enter the Cow Creek Unit around August 16 where they will remain until approximately September 23 or until utilization levels are met. Livestock will enter the Grouse Creek Unit last where they will remain until the end of the permitted season or until utilization standards are reached, whichever occurs first.

Lester Creek Allotment

Cattle will trail down Forest Road (FSR) 128 to the allotment where they will enter the White Flat area. Cattle will be held in this area by regular riding for six to eight weeks, or until utilization levels are reached. Cattle will then be moved to the Lester Creek area where they will remain until utilization levels are met or until the end of the permitted season. Any cattle that drift into the wrong area will be promptly herded back over the ridge into the proper area. Livestock will exit the allotment by trailing back over FSR 128 to private property.

Mennecke Allotment

This allotment will be grazed in the following rotation: River Unit, Cayuse/Mennecke Unit, Bock Creek Unit and Rock Creek Unit. One hundred head of cow/calf pairs will enter the River Unit on May 1, where they will remain until May 26, when they will be moved to the Cayuse/Mennecke Unit. The remainder of the authorized cattle will enter this unit on June 1 and will remain for four to six weeks, depending on forage availability. Cattle will then be moved to the Bock Creek Unit, where they will remain for four to six weeks. Cattle will be moved to the Rock Creek Unit last.

Rattlesnake Allotment

Thirty-five head of livestock will enter the Flat Iron area of the South Fork Unit no earlier than April 15. The rest of the livestock will enter the South Fork and Slide Gulch Units no earlier than May 1. Around June 1, approximately 75 pair will be placed on the seedings in the Elk Creek Unit. These seedings are becoming rank and it is hoped that earlier grazing will increase utilization on them. Once utilization levels are met in these units, typically six to eight weeks after livestock enter the units, cattle will be moved to the Rattlesnake Unit. Livestock will remain in the Rattlesnake Unit until utilization levels are reached, or August 15, whichever comes first, as directed in the Biological Opinion addressing this allotment (File #110.0500/1-4-99-F-17). Livestock will then be moved to the Elk Creek Unit where they will remain until mid-to late-September, depending on forage conditions. Once utilization levels have been reached in the Elk Creek Unit, livestock will be moved to the Long Gulch Unit. The Slide Gulch Unit will be rested this season. As in previous years, calves will be weaned this fall at the corrals in Jackass Flat as cattle are moved into the Long Gulch unit.

When cattle are moved through the Rattlesnake Unit after August 15 to access other portions of the allotment, they should be moved in small groups down the road and kept out of the Rattlesnake Creek riparian area.

Smith Prairie Allotment

Livestock may enter the Lower Bench Unit no sooner than May 1. Cattle will remain in this unit for four to six weeks, or until utilization levels are met. Livestock will then be moved to the Gooseneck Unit where they will remain for four to six weeks. After proper use is achieved in the Gooseneck Unit, livestock will be moved to the Lava Creek Unit where they will remain until approximately mid-September. The Smith Creek Unit will be used last. The Strawberry Creek Unit will be rested this year.

Spring Creek Allotment

Livestock will enter the River Unit first this season, where they will remain for approximately three to five weeks or until use standards are met. Livestock will then be moved to the Pony Flat Unit where they will remain for approximately three to five weeks. The Pony Creek Unit will be grazed last. Livestock should be moved from each unit, and then off the forest, when proper use levels are reached.

Williams Creek and Rimrock Grazing Allotments

These are on-off allotments that are composed mostly of private land and have very little National Forest System lands within their boundaries. As discussed at the spring meeting, turn-on on the Rimrock Allotment will be delayed until at least April 15, depending on snow conditions. The Williams Creek Allotment will turn on as planned on July 1. Please ensure that utilization standards on the National Forest portions of these allotments are not exceeded.

STANDARDS AND GUIDES

Close monitoring of utilization levels and diligent removal of livestock when they are reached is critical to ensure compliance with end-of-season utilization standards. Failure to meet these standards may result in the modification of grazing management, including reductions in Head Months or permitted area.

The following standards and guidelines apply to your allotments:

- Maximum forage utilization of representative areas within each pasture shall not exceed the values shown below at the end of the growing season. Variation in utilization standards in order to achieve specific vegetative management objectives shall occur with a site-specific or project-level decision according to direction in FSM 1922.5.
 - Riparian Areas: Maximum 45 percent use or retain a minimum 4-inch stubble height of hydric greenline species, whichever occurs first.
 - Upland Vegetative Cover Types: Early season or season long pastures – 40 percent use. Vegetative slow growth, after seed ripe conditions or late season pastures – 50 percent use. (RAST01, p. III-45)
- Livestock salting is prohibited in Riparian Conservation Areas (RCAs). Place salt no closer than ¼ mile from water and not within 100 feet of roads. Move salt from areas where utilization standards have been met. (RAST04, p. III-45)
- All livestock water developments must provide access and escape to and from water for all types of wildlife. (RAST09, p. III-45)
- Bulls must test negative for Trichomoniasis before entering National Forest System lands.

- Only certified weed-free hay and mulch are allowed on National Forest System lands.

Because they are early season units, upland utilization levels in the River Unit of the Mennecke allotment, the South Fork and Trail Creek units of the Rattlesnake allotment, the Lower Bench and Gooseneck Units of the Smith Prairie and the Pony Flat Unit of the Spring Creek allotment are 40%.

Due to the degraded condition caused by a blowout in 1996, Long Gulch has a 30 percent riparian utilization standard. A 5-inch stubble height along the greenline in riparian areas, or 25 percent use on current year's growth of the young willows in Long Gulch is acceptable. The 5-inch stubble height standard is preferred for determining when it is time to move the livestock to the next pasture.

IMPROVEMENTS

Your Term Grazing Permit contains a complete list of range improvements associated with your allotments. Please note that all range improvements must be maintained to a proper functioning condition before livestock are placed on each allotment. Failure to do so is a violation of your term grazing permit and is subject to permit action. In the event improvements cannot be practically maintained to standard, you should notify this office so we can identify them for reconstruction as funds become available.

Non-functioning range improvements need to be brought to standard, or arrangements made with district range personnel to have them removed. Abandonment of improvements is not acceptable – if developments are not functioning and are no longer needed, they must be removed. If they are in a location that does not allow for removal, these non-functioning improvements still need to allow for bird and small mammal escape. Metal troughs need to have holes cut in them large enough to allow birds and small mammals to escape from them or be tipped over so that they do not hold water. Tires also need to have holes cut in them, or be popped loose from their cement bottom and propped up slightly on edge, to allow birds and small mammals to escape from them. If none of these options are feasible, a wildlife escape ramp needs to be installed and maintained in the trough.

As discussed this spring, new wildlife escape ramps need to be installed in tire troughs. These ramps are being supplied by the Forest Service and you will be notified when they are available to be picked up. Because of the number of developments on your allotments, you will be given two years to comply with wildlife escape ramp installation. The following table outlines a draft completion schedule for your allotments. The Rimrock allotment does not have any water developments on National Forest System lands, therefore it is not included in the schedule.

Allotment	2011	2012
Grouse Creek	South Fork Unit, Wood Creek Unit	Cow Creek Unit, Grouse Creek Unit
Lester Creek		Lester Creek, White Flat
Mennecke	Cayuse-Mennecke Unit	Bock Creek, Rock Creek
Rattlesnake	Little Rattlesnake, Long Gulch, Slide Gulch	Elk Creek, Trail Creek
Smith Prairie	Lower Bench, Gooseneck, Lava, Strawberry, Smith Creek	
Spring Creek	Pony Creek	
Williams Creek	Williams Creek	

Ladders should be installed in all troughs as scheduled by September 1, 2011. This direction also includes troughs that hold water in the spring but dry up later in the grazing season. Failure to comply could result in adverse action to your permit. If you feel that you cannot meet this schedule, please contact Tina as soon as possible to discuss an alternate schedule. **Direction on water developments also applies to the private land in the Grouse Creek Allotment that is under the private land permit, so be sure to include these troughs in your maintenance schedule.**

Installation of a water development at the old Long Gulch Ranger Station was discussed at the spring meeting. The pipe from this spring still carries water and could potentially provide off-site water for livestock. Tina is in the process of determining if the Forest Service holds a water right on this spring. She will keep you informed on what she finds out and will continue to work with you on developing this spring. At a minimum, cultural and plant clearances will need to be done if it is decided to pursue development.

Last fall, Bill and Jackie Davison and Tina rode in to the Goat Creek Trough #1332 on the Lester Creek Allotment to see if it could be accessed with equipment. At the meeting this spring, Bill determined that he thought he could get a small dozer in to the trough. He requested that they be allowed to replace the trough with a pond. Tina is in the process of discussing the possibility of doing this with other Forest personnel. Because a pond would block the stream channel, approval of a pond at this site may not be granted. Tina will keep you informed of her discussions and findings.

In an inspection on the Grouse Creek Allotment last fall, it was determined that water development #2027 on the Grouse Creek Allotment is not functioning. There is pipe coming out of the hill on the southwestern side of the spring, but there is very little water coming out of it, and there is no pipe connected to the trough. It appears that water surfaces in many locations above the tire trough. This large spring area is being heavily impacted by livestock. This trough should be re-located, if possible, outside of the spring area. The spring should be fenced to protect it from impact by livestock. Range personnel plan to inspect the spring prior to livestock entering the unit in the 2011 grazing season to determine how well the area recovers after grazing.

It was agreed that the remainder of the Williams Creek Boundary Fence (#1104) on the Williams Creek Allotment would be removed by the end of October, 2011. The northern portion of this fence near NFS Road #128 (Meadow Creek Road) will be retained and brought to functioning to help control livestock drift along Forest Road 128. The cattleguard at this location (#1635) was also discussed. It was determined that this cattleguard is necessary to prevent cattle from drifting along the road and entering the wrong allotment. The drift fences on either side of it will be maintained to standard and the gate will be closed this summer to help prevent cattle drift.

It was agreed that the middle drift fence (no improvement number) in the Trail Creek Unit of the Rattlesnake Allotment would be removed this summer.

It was requested that permittees be allowed to rebuild a portion of the unit boundary fence at the Corral Creek trailhead in the Rattlesnake Unit. This fence has several jogs, making it difficult to maintain. Tina has spoken with recreation personnel and they have determined that there would be no issue with reconstructing that portion of the fence. Prior to reconstruction, however, permittees should schedule an on-the-ground meeting with range and recreation staff to discuss fence layout.

It was pointed out at the spring meeting that there is still wire along the South Fork of the Boise River from the enclosure that used to be there. This enclosure was removed by the Boise Valley Fly Fishermen, but apparently not all wire was removed. Tina will work to schedule removal of wire as a YCC project this summer.

Cattleguards are no longer considered part of your annual maintenance. It is still your responsibility to inspect cattleguards annually and inform the Forest Service of known problems or maintenance needs on them within your allotment boundaries. This includes, but is not limited to, wing or grate repair or replacement, brush removal, and cleaning. As was discussed at the meeting, the Forest Service road crew has scheduled to clean cattleguard #1643 at the eastern end of the Spring Creek Allotment. However, it is not known when the road crew will be on site to clean it. As you discussed at the spring meeting, you may partially clean this cattleguard prior to the road crew to prevent livestock from walking it.

RIDER OR PERMITTEE INSTRUCTIONS

Off dates for these allotments are considered approximate and will depend on utilization levels. To prevent over-utilization, a concerted effort should be made to distribute cattle over the entire allotment and to effectively graze all suitable areas in that unit. Permitted numbers are based on the premise that active management will occur to effect adequate livestock distribution. Cattle need to be moved before meeting riparian and upland grazing standards. If cattle are allowed to concentrate in riparian areas and at water developments without being distributed to unused areas of the allotment, the grazing capacity of the allotment is diminished to those areas only.

Permittee monitoring of utilization levels is not mandatory, but is highly advised since permittees will be held accountable for any failures to meet end-of-season compliance monitoring.

REQUIRED REPORTING

Enclosed are several copies of a Year-end Grazing Report for you to record actual use data and range improvement maintenance for the 2011 grazing season for your allotments. You need to record the date and number of cattle turned onto each allotment, the number and date cattle are removed from each unit, and estimate the time and cost of management actions, including livestock herding and improvement maintenance, associated with each allotment. Accurate records of these dates, maintenance work, and range improvement needs should be kept and returned to our office at the end of the grazing season. The Forest Service uses these records to help allocate Range Betterment Funds. These funds are used to purchase materials for improvements. **This report should be returned to the Forest Service's Mountain Home Ranger District office no later than December 1, 2011.**

INSPECTIONS AND MONITORING

Range personnel may require you to delay your entry date on any of your allotments based on range readiness inspections that they have completed. You will be notified as soon as possible if your turn-on date is delayed.

Range personnel may conduct utilization monitoring and improvement inspections periodically on your allotments.

COORDINATION AND COOPERATION

The US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) is responsible for wolf management in Idaho. The wolf coordinator for USFWS is Hilary Cooley. Any questions you may have regarding wolf management should be directed to her. She can be reached at 208-685-6963.

If you suspect a wolf depredation has occurred on your livestock, USDA/APHIS/Wildlife Services (Wildlife Services) should be contacted as soon as possible. The local Wildlife Services contact for this area is Jered Hedelius. He can be reached at (208) 681-8756 or (208) 934-4354 (Central District Office). In the event that you cannot reach Jered, Todd Grimm should be contacted at 208-378-5077.

OTHER

When livestock carcasses are located near campgrounds, roads, trails or water, reasonable and appropriate action must be taken to remove any carcasses. Carcasses or remains should be moved at least 100 yards from campgrounds, roads, trails or water if possible. If this cannot be reasonably accomplished, the permittee should contact the Tina, Monte or Cindy to discuss the problem and determine what action would be appropriate for each site specific instance. Although the Forest Service recognizes that disposal of carcasses is not always feasible in many situations there are a number of reasonable options available for the disposal of single or multiple carcasses.

The White Flat Timber Environmental Analysis (EA) is being re-visited this year; however, operations will not occur until next year at the earliest. The EA will be

proposing to close some unauthorized routes and gate others, allowing administrative use only. The unauthorized ATV route along the ridge between White Flat and Lester Creek will also be closed under the proposed action. Once the harvesting and burning is completed, livestock would be held out of aspen clones until new seedlings reach eight to ten feet in height. This would be accomplished by fencing or holding livestock off the area.

Please note that Forest Road 137A (on the ridge between Rock Creek and Deer Creek) is closed to motorized travel. Anyone caught utilizing this road without authorization will be cited.

As discussed at the spring meeting, the private land permit on the Grouse Creek Allotment will expire the end of 2012. If a copy of a new agreement is not obtained, the numbers associated with this permit (35 cow/calf pairs) will no longer be authorized to graze the allotment.

As requested at the spring meeting, please find attached a copy of the Rattlesnake Allotment map showing structural range improvements. Additional maps for other allotments can be provided upon request.

The Forest Service's Motor Vehicle Use Rule is in place on the Mountain Home Ranger District. Public motorized, wheeled vehicle use is prohibited on all NFS lands except on routes that are designated on the current year's Motorized Vehicle Use Map. This AOI authorizes you and your employees to use wheeled motor vehicles off of designated routes for administrative use within your allotments for livestock management purposes. This administrative use includes salting and herding of livestock, maintenance of range improvements, and forage utilization inspections. Use of heavy equipment, such as bulldozers or backhoes is **not** included in this authorization. Use of heavy equipment will need to be requested through and approved by the District Ranger on a case-by-case basis.

<i>/s/ W. G. Davison, Vice President</i>	<i>April 22, 2011</i>
Permittee	Date

<i>/s/ Stephaney Church</i>	<i>May 2, 2011</i>
District Ranger	Date